THE

CRISIS.

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THIS Country is now reduced to a Situation really Degrading and Deplorable, through the ſtrange Obſtinacy and weak Prejudices of the King, who is determined, even at the riſk of his own SAFETY, the Preſervation of the Kingdom, and contrary to the united voice of his People, to encourage and protect an abandoned ſet of Men in the DESTRUCTION of that Conſtitution, he was Sworn to SUPPORT and DEFEND.

Hiſtory fatally informs us, that the Engliſh have been driven to extremes, by Cauſes of leſs Moment than thoſe, which have ſhaken this Kingdom during the preſent Reign.

Since the laſt ſtupendous Revolution, it has been generally believed, that the nature of our Conſtitution, became clearly aſcer-

aſcertained, and fixt on Firmer and more laſting Principles, than it had known before that glorious Æra; at leaſt the obtaining theſe Ends, as well as redreſſing Grievances, are acknowledged to be the Motives to the tranſactions of thoſe Times. For had the exorbitant Power of the Crown been left *unlimitted* and *unſettled*, as before that event, and the Liberties and Privileges of the Subjects of England, in the ſame undecided State; it would have been only to change the Name of Maſters, and not the Nature of their Sovereignty. And, if inſtead of removing the Cauſes of our Sufferings, and fixing our Rights and Liberties, we then gave to a Houſe of Commons, an unlimited Power to diſpoſe of the laſt according to their Inclination; it was only changing the Poſſeſſors of Arbitrary Power, by granting to a PROSTITUTED ſet of Repreſentitives what was denied the King; and thus this illuſtrious Action of the Revolution, muſt appear to be the reſult of Faction, and averſion to one Intereſt, or unwarrantable Zeal for another. In what Manner can a Nation be more ſettled in its Freedom, by transferring ARBITRARY POWER from one Part of the Conſtitution to another.

It cannot be denied, but that the Laws, which were then enacted to eſtabliſh upon a Foundation not to be again Shaken, the Freedom of the Engliſh Nation, and the Liberties of the People ought to be conſidered, as Unalterable, the very Baſis and Boundary of the King's Prerogative, and the Rights of Engliſhmen, ſomething in the Government like the Center in the Earth, the fixt Point, round which all Things move and to which they tend.

Thoſe Acts which were made at the Revolution, relative to the Conſtitution, ſuch as the BILL of RIGHTS, and afterwards in Conſequence of it THE ACT OF SETTLEMENT, which may be juſtly deemed the *compact* between the *Houſe of Hanover* and the *People of England*, and which was preſerved Inviolate, till broken by the *unhallowed* Hands of the Preſent SOVEREIGN and his Miniſters; are undoubtedly of a Nature more SACRED than thoſe which eſtabliſhed a Turnpike Road.

Thoſe Acts founded on our former Rights in MAGNA CHARTA, ought to be conſidered as the eſſential Authority by which

which the Houſe of Commons exiſts, than Laws which a Parliament may Abrogate, through pure Inclination to indulge a King, or his Miniſters, to make them Deſpotic, and the People Miſerable; for it muſt appear ſtrangely abſurd in a Conſtitution, that the Repreſentatives of the People who form a third Part of it, ſhould be Authoriſed by them to deſtroy their Liberties, and thereby exclude them from the Rights which they poſſeſs in the Government of the Kingdom? Beſides, it is contrary to the very Idea of a *free* State, that a People ſhould have given a Power of *ſacrificing* their Privileges, to Men choſen the Guardians of them.

Something muſt exiſt in a FREE STATE, which no Part of it can be authoriſed to alter or deſtroy, otherwiſe the Idea of a Conſtitution cannot Subſiſt; for unleſs we allow the Freeholders and Electors of GREAT BRITAIN to be *ſuperior* to a Houſe of Commons, we grant to them an ABSOLUTE POWER, a Power inconſiſtent with the Notion of a FREE PEOPLE, and deſtructive of the Principles of a MIXED GOVERNMENT.

Should it be acknowledged, that, though the Commons have exerciſed a power of annihilating many Privileges and Rights, belonging to the People, and, that they poſſeſs no legal Title to it; then all Laws ſubverſive of Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, act of Settlement, and ſpirit of the Conſtitution, are an exceſs of their Authority, and a Violation of their Truſt; for which the preſent INFAMOUS PARLIAMENT, ought not only to be diſſolved, but every MEMBER who viſibly engaged in the Deſtruction of the Peoples Rights, ſhould ſuffer DEATH, together with thoſe Helliſh MINISTERS who formed a deſign of enſlaving the People; and it muſt be equally Juſt, as well as Neceſſary, to call to a ſtrict Account the FIRST MAGISTRATE, who could be baſe enough to encourage the Deſtruction of our LIBERTIES and a SUBVERSION of the nobleſt Conſtitution in the World; as an Example to future Kings and Miniſters.

If any Miniſterial Hireling ſhould aſſert that our Repreſentatives after the Hour of Election, are no longer anſwerable for their

their Conduct, and are legally inveſted with Authority to Deſtroy our Rights and Liberties at their Pleaſure; then, what did King James do more than this by his Prerogative? and of what Advantage has the Revolution proved to us, if Subverting the Conſtitution be legally placed in the Hands of the Repreſentatives? in what Senſe does the Idea of a Free State, or the Liberty of the PEOPLE exiſt, when it depends upon nothing more premanent or eſtabliſhed, than the vague, rapacious, or intereſted inclination of a Majority of FIVE HUNDRED and FIFTY EIGHT MEN, open to the inſidious Attacks of a WEAK, or DESIGNING PRINCE, and his MINISTERS? ſurely it will be granted, that whether King, or Miniſter, who by undue influence ſhould prevail in paſſing Laws ſubverſive of the Statutes before mentioned, muſt be deemed an Offender againſt the moſt ſacred of all Human Enjoyments, Liberty and the Conſtitution of his Country, and equally Criminal with JAMES THE SECOND and his Miniſters.

The whole preſumptive Title a Parliament can pretend to have of diſpoſing of our RIGHTS and PREVILEGES can be but PREROGATIVE, which in many inſtances has been illegally carried beyond the Limits of Liberty and the Conſtitution. It is therefore neceſſary we ſhould recur to the Spirit of the Conſtitution with the ſtricteſt Rigour and Perſeverance.

The only Reaſon that can be given, why our Forefathers in the ancient Fundamental Statutes of the Realm, have delivered nothing verbally explicit on this Head; of limiting the Power of their Repreſentatives, derives it Origin from the ſame Cauſe that the ROMANS had no Laws againſt Parricide: they never conceived that the thought of BETRAYING or SELLING a PEOPLES LIBERTIES, any more than MURDERING a FATHER could enter the Human Heart: they never imagined that the Repreſentative could ever poſſeſs an Intereſt diſtinct from that of his Conſtituent, or that pecuniary Advantage could outweigh the Public good in his Breaſt: they did not foreſee, that MINISTERS might have Occaſion to OPPRESS US, for the Gratification of a WEAK or WICKED PRINCE, or that ENGLISHMEN no longer animated by the Soul of Public Proſperity, might Degenerate into granting OPPERSSIVE TAXES, till the NATION would be brought within ONE STEP of RUIN:

RUIN: Or that Laws eſſential to the Eſtabliſhment of Freedom and Security of the State, could be made to burſt at the Mandate of a Miniſter, by the Breath of a Majority of Five Hundred and Fifty Eight Men.

When the Repreſentatives of the People Act contrary to the very Elements of the Conſtitution, betray and give up the RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, and LIBERTIES of the PEOPLE, though nothing in the Fundamental Statutes literally prohibit ſo ignominious a Behaviour; the very Nature of their Station, the innate ſenſe of Right, and Original Spirit of Government, directly contradict all poſibility of their having Title for ſuch proceedings; and whenever it is done, it is an unjuſt and wanton Exertion of Power, and not of Authority: add to this dreadful and henious Crime the indignant and humiliating Conſideration, that our Equals whom we chuſe to ſave, have ſold us like our Cattle to a WEAK (not to ſay worſe) KING, and his accurſed MINISTERS, who have paid our Betrayers with a Part of that Money which was moſt unjuſtly levied on us, not to Anſwer the NECESSITY of Government, but for the moſt Infamous and Villainous Purpoſes.

The Particulars mentioned in the Bill of Rights, at the Revolution, where then conſidered as ſo many Violations committed by King James, on the Previleges of the People, and neceſſary to be remedied, for the ſake of ſecuring our Religion, and reeſtabliſhing Liberty and the Conſtitution.

The Grievances at that Time complained of againſt the Sovereign, had their Foundation in Juſtice and the Rights of the People and the redreſſing them in the Nature of the Couſtitution: otherwiſe, by what Arguments could be aſſigned a Cauſe of Complaint againſt the Prince on the Throne or preſerve thoſe Men who accompliſhed the Revolution from the imputation of Traitors and Rebels to their King.

They conſidered the Conſtitution as the primary Object of an Engliſhman; and the King but as the Secondary; who by his attempts towards Deſpotiſm, became a Rebel againſt this ſuperior Power. They juſtly reaſoned, that as the People, who make a Third of the

Conſtitution

Conſtitution, are deemed Traitors, for plotting or attempting the life of, or taking up Arms againſt the King, who forms another Third of the Conſtitution, and doomed to Death in conſequence of ſuch Behaviour; in like Manner King JAMES rebelled againſt two Thirds of the Government, by attempting to ſubvert their Religion and Liberties: for our Conſtitution, ſuppoſes, that each Part of it has a Right to be preſerved; that Two are more than One; and the Happineſs of a whole PEOPLE to be preſerved, in preference to the Ambition or pernicious Paſſion or Deſigns of a King.

Shall then the preſent Sovereign and his Miniſters be exempted from a ſtrict and nice INQUIRY into their Conduct, becauſe they have effected in one Method, the very Deſpotiſm which was oppoſed in JAMES, who was deſervedly drove into Exile, for attempting it in another. Forbid it Heaven! and every Thing that is Dear to ENGLISHMEN.

To the PUBLIC.

The POEM called the PROPHECY of RUIN, repeatedly adverti[illegible]ſed to be publiſhed in Quarto, Price 1s. 6d. the Author has been unavoidably obliged to poſtpone from Time to Time, through a ſevere Illneſs; in order therefore to make ſome Compenſation to the Public, for the Trouble and various Diſappointments they have met with, the ENTIRE POEM will be given next *Friday* Noon, in No. 12. of the CRISIS, containing Three SHEETS in FOLIO, at the *reduced Price* of 6d.

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